DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 418 357 CG 028 377

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TITLE The Leitmotif of Learning through the Extracurriculum.
PUB DATE 1997-03-21
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Joint Conference of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and American College Personnel Association (Chicago, IL, March 19-23, 1997).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Strategies; *Extracurricular Activities; Higher Education; *Learning; *Peer Influence; *Student Development; Student Personnel Services; Undergraduate Students

ABSTRACT

Some perspectives on the potential of undergraduates' formal and informal experiences outside of the classroom are detailed. The paper presents historical information beginning with the concern of inculcating good manners and habits of responsibility as learning objectives for the extracurriculum. It discusses the analogy of the extracurriculum as a real-life laboratory situation and introduces the goal of developing good leadership, fellowship, and other qualities of good citizenship. Next, the paper details the articulation of a broader educational philosophy for student activities and calls for the reintegration of the "out-of-class" experiences and the classroom, and the identification of learning goals to be a distinct contribution of the extracurriculum itself to the academic life of the institution. The paper concludes with a brief summary of what current research reveals about the effects of student involvement in out-of-class activities. (MKA)

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ED 418 357

National Convention: American College Personnel Association and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Chicago, IL, 4:00pm, Friday, March 21, 1997.

The Leitmotif of Learning through the Extracurriculum

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As I was casting about for a topic for this Senior Scholar program, "Looking to Our Past: A Retrospective View of the Profession," I recalled my early days in the field. I became interested in the student affairs profession while a senior at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Returning to the University as a freshman veteran after World War II, I became increasingly involved in student activities as a participant and in leadership positions. Wisconsin's full-time student activities adviser was Gordon Klopf, later the dean of students at Buffalo and dean of the Bank Street College of Education in New York City. While observing Gordon advising organizations and student leaders, it suddenly occurred to me that he was at work and that people could actually get paid for doing what I was already doing for fun and for free.

This momentous insight led to a decade of working with student leaders and student organizations at the University of Minnesota in its Student Activities Bureau where I learned about student activities and student personnel work from my boss, E. G. Williamson, a preeminent figure in the history of our field and a principal author of the 1949 Student Personnel Point of View. Dean Williamson's educational philosophy could well be summed up in his words as follows, "...we do hold to an educational point of view that enthrones reason as the center of education - but reason fully integrated with a social ethic and a healthy personality..." (1961, p. 427). His writings

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and programs reflected a deep concern with infusing the extracurriculum with intellectual content, with utilizing student activities as an arena for learning. That philosophy has permeated my thinking throughout my career in student affairs and led me, in this instance, to the notion of re-examining the ways in which the learning ideal has been manifest in the literature on the extracurriculum in higher education.

Accordingly, I decided to trace some of the ways in which the leitmotif, or theme, of learning through participation in the extracurriculum has been expressed in the history and literature of student affairs, recapturing what our predecessors had to say about the kinds of learning they believed took place in the out-of-class. Before proceeding further, however, it may be helpful to come to some common understanding of what we mean by the terms, extracurriculum and learning.

By extracurriculum, I refer to the kinds of formal and informal experiences of undergraduate students that occur within the collegiate environment but outside of the formal classroom experience or the faculty managed curriculum. Included would be formal student organizations and residential units as well as informal groupings under the auspices of the institution. I would not include work off-campus, living at home, or hanging out with old high school buddies, all of which may have learning overtones, often quite potent, but which are not strictly under the purview of the college or university.

Defining learning is another, but not necessarily more complex problem. If we think of learning much as Webster does, as the "acquisition of knowledge, a skill, or an understanding of a phenomenon by study, instruction,

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or experience" we have a structure by which to particularize our concept of extracurricular learning.

The notion that education was taking place outside of the college classroom has a long and honorable history. We can all recall the Duke of Wellington's famous phrase, "The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton" (1889). In the fledgling United States it was the colonial literary society, organized and maintained by undergraduates, that "respected reason, nurtured intellect, and subjected much that was established to scrutiny and debate" (Rudolph, 1962, p. 141) and not the formal curriculum which was considered by students to be arid and sterile. Rudolph went on to claim that "Nowhere else was reason so fully enthroned in the college as in the activities of the literary societies" (p. 138) which were essentially debating clubs. Here is where the real intellectual life of those early colleges took place - not in the classroom. In fact the college authorities appeared to harbor a great deal of hostility to the intellect. Rudolph reports, for example, that the first president of Wofford College in South Carolina said, "We have no faith in the capabilities of mere intellectual training" (p. 139) or as the president of Amhurst said, "Character is of more consequence than intellect" (p. 139). In contrast, it was the extracurriculum in these college, not the classroom, that gave prestige to the life of the mind.

Then, after the Civil War, the rigid rules governing life in the colleges began to be relaxed, discipline was not as severe, and students were allowed much more freedom, but without a corresponding degree of faculty guidance. The result was the emergence of an increasingly powerful extracurriculum divorced from much connection with the academic life. It was

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in the extracurriculum that able and ambitious students invested their time and it was in the extracurriculum that much of the real learning was taking place. Brubacher and Rudy (1976) cite a popular college motto of the time which alludes to the educational viability of the extracurriculum, "Don't Let Your Studies Interfere with Your Education" (p. 120). It was in this same period (1909) that President Woodrow Wilson of Princeton made his famous remark that, in college exracurricular life, "the sideshows are so numerous, so diverting - so important, if you will - that they have swallowed up the circus" (p. 121).

All of this is by way of saying that what had been a unified campus with the extracurriculum and curriculum fully integrated had, after the Civil War, diverged widely to the dismay of college authorities who, as did Woodrow Wilson, saw the extracurriculum as a challenge if not a threat to the institution and its mission. About the time of World War I, leaders began to take positive action to link activities and the classroom with the unity of the two as a goal. The development of student personnel services was to be the means by which this reintegration was to occur - by placing student life at the center of institutional concern.

As we examine the student personnel movement, the student development movement, and the current emphasis upon learning, we can see that these are all organizational attempts to bring the extracurriculum to heel - to tame it and have it serve higher education rather than act at cross-purposes to the academic process.

We have established the broad context for the extracurricular learning theme in higher education, namely that desirable learning, consistent with the collegiate mission, can and should be taking place in all aspects of campus

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life, both in and out of the classroom. What then is this "desirable learning?" An integral and necessary aspect of examining extracurricular education is to look at what it is that authorities over the years have believed students should be learning.

Frederick Keppel, dean of Columbia College, who wrote about The Undergraduate and His College in 1917, said that,

> If I were asked to name the three things which college life ought to do and too often fails to do, I should say, first, to improve student manners; second, to inculcate a spirit of human charity; and third, to develop habits of personal responsibility. (p. 120)

Although Keppel was very interested in student activities and student life, he was a realist about the extent of student devotion to the life of the intellect, saying with wry amusement, "Some of us will recall President Lowell's description of an apocryphal island in the Southern Pacific where the college course consisted of prescribed athletics, which the students neglected as much as they dared in order to devote themselves to reading, writing, and debating" (pp. 214-15).

But Keppel clearly believed in the salutary effects of education outside the classroom:

> The best justification of college life is that it approximates, sometimes more closely than the curriculum itself, the new ideas of what education ought to be. It has not been imposed upon college conditions, but has grown up out of them, and in its groping way it furnishes a training in "education by doing" - which the educational prophets of our day tell us is a far sounder process than is education by being told. (p. 346)

And finally, Keppel has provided us with a superb justification of the kind of education he believed to be inherent in the extracurriculum:

> What, after all, is the peculiar offering which justifies the good college in demanding its place in our complex and overcrowded scheme of things? Certainly it is not the plan of organization

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> nor the course as a thing in itself. It is, I think, the basic conception of a group of young men living and working and thinking and dreaming together, free to let their thoughts and dreams determine their future for them. These young men, hourly learning from one another, are brought into touch with the wisdom of the past, the circumstances of the present, and the vision of the future, by a group of older students, striving to provide them with ideas rather than beliefs, and guiding them in observing for themselves nature's laws and human relationships. (p. 370)

Some twenty years later, Harold Hand (1938), professor of education at Stanford University, met with a group of student leaders in a seminar devoted to the problems of campus leadership. Out of this seminar came a book, Campus Activities, written principally by the student participants in the seminar. The authors compiled a list of 27 learning objectives for the extracurriculum stemming from their belief that,

> ...campus activities can be so conceived, so organized, and so administered that they will afford numerous real-life laboratory situations in which students can learn through "purposeful and responsible doing" to live democratically here and now, and thus equip themselves for so living in after-college years. (p. 344)

That same year, Esther Lloyd Jones and Margaret Smith published one of the pioneering books in the field of student affairs, A Student Personnel Program for Higher Education (1938). Their philosophy was embodied in their belief that,

> Extracurricular activities offer the opportunity for students to develop good qualities of leadership and followership. They offer the opportunity to serve the institution; to experience and to help create good fellowship and social good will; they further self-regulation, and all-around growth. They assist students in adjusting to their student world and in learning the qualities of good citizenship. (p. 186)

Ruth Strang of Columbia Teachers College wrote one of the first books to be devoted to the extracurriculum in her Group Activities in College and Secondary Schools (1946). She believed that "Group activities in college and secondary school are social laboratories in which students may learn the ways

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of democracy" (p. 29). The laboratory metaphor was repeated in her 1951 statement.

> Informal student activities are an intrinsic part of college education and the "better half" of personnel work. They constitute the social curriculum; they are a laboratory for the development of personality. There is a tendency for the recognized curriculum and the "extracurriculum" to become welded together into a total pattern of experience, which adds up to a college education. (p. 239).

Arbuckle (1953) and the team of Woolf and Woolf (1953), in their texts on student personnel work, continued the education for democracy and citizenship theme: "...the major purpose of an education would appear to be to help develop the good citizen" (Arbuckle, p. 249), and "Extra-class activities offer many opportunities for learning, particularly in the areas of citizenship and leadership" (Woolf & Woolf, p. 77). Several years earlier, however, an American Council on Education study by Brouwer (1949) had already looked beyond education for citizenship to a more sophisticated integration of the classroom and the out-of-class:

> The combination of class and extra-class experiences, when they are integrated..., seems more likely to provide the total complement of personal resources: information from class experiences is mediated by beliefs arising from extra-class life, and vice versa; extra-class interest become refined, organized, and built into strong personal assets through classroom experiences, and vice versa. Total development demands a unity in the educational program which our traditional, dichotomous "class and extra-class" division does not provide. (pp. 51-52).

Williamson gave the educational impact of the extracurriculum a great deal of his attention, both in his writings and in the campus programming he directed. Writing about general education in 1952, he sounded a theme which was to resonate through much of his later thinking, "...the purpose of the extracurriculum...is its contribution to the personal development of student

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participants. The developing personality, intellect as well as behavior, is the basic objective to be achieved through the extracurriculum" (p. 231).

In that same chapter, Williamson listed what he believed to be some of the desirable behaviors that might be learned through participation in activities: the need in a democracy for compromise; how to deal with authority; respect for diversity; selecting personal activities on a basis other than the pleasure-pain principle; how to use experts and consultants; identification of effective leaders; including external references and perspectives in group decision making; the application of techniques of critical inquiry to emotionally charged social or moral conflicts; studying and dealing with conflicts of points of view; and supporting worth-while civic projects through voluntarism (pp. 245-248).

Williamson's administrative/educational philosophy is embodied in this short quotation in which he exhorted student personnel workers to "...continually appraise each service function and seek to perform it in such a way as to increase the likelihood that some educational gain will follow for students" (1957, p. 231). He believed that all the members of the student affairs program should see themselves as educators.

Following Brouwer (1949) and Williamson (1952), the learning goals educators set for the extracurriculum continued to evolve beyond learning good citizenship and leadership. Bergstresser and Wells (1954), for example, believed that the academic program can "result in deeper and more permanent learning, if experiences outside the classroom are deliberately planned to provide opportunities for the immediate application of academic learnings in the affairs of campus life" (p.109).

Wilson (1956), interested in education about world affairs, saw student activities as an influential factor in such education stating that,

> ...student activities may be worth while on character-making and emotional grounds, but their primary justification lies in the contribution they may make to intellectual and aesthetic development...Some legitimate activities of the strenuous college life may be worth while simply as experience in group action, as training in leadership, as a form of civic apprenticeship. But many other activities carry a reasonable part of the intellectual weight of the institution. (p. 111)

Kate Mueller (1961) at Indiana University, saw the activities program as contributing to the development of students in four ways: "(1) complementing classroom instruction, or enhancing academic learning; (2) developing social interaction; (3) providing for a profitable use of leisure time; and (4) encouraging better values and higher standards" (p. 275).

Mueller then reviewed one element of the activities program, student government, and elaborated on the kinds of learning that ought to be taking place in that arena: "(1) The learning of information about democracy, its philosophy, history, goals, methods, and limitations; (2) the learning of democratic attitudes, conviction, values, habits of mind...(3) the learning of democratic skills, human interaction, and techniques of family, community, national, and international living" (p.74).

Shaffer and Martinson (1966), also from Indiana University, contributed an insightful perspective on the problem of seeking academic validation of the extracurriculum.

> Because of the ambiguity of the term, "student activities," and the difficulty in changing the traditional perception of activities from social and recreational emphases to an academic and intellectual orientation, attempts to postulate specific lists of objectives duplicate those of the objectives of education itself. Ideas frequently mentioned are: attaining a balanced personality; increasing breadth of interests; developing human relations skills; exercising responsibility and judgment;

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participating in self-government; and developing loyalty to the college. (p. 74)

It remained for Dean Herbert Stroup of Brooklyn College to tackle the problem of formulating a philosophical justification for student activities in American institutions of higher education. It is clear that his approach admitted no schism between campus and classroom, that the extracurriculum had a legitimate claim to educational substance.

> The student activities program secures its rationale only as it supports the chosen goals of the university in its details and general organization of its activities. Theoretically, there can never be a division between the student activities program and the rest of the university, between the curriculum and the noncurriculum. Both are contributors to the university's aims. (1964, pp.52-53)

And again:

> The role of student activities, then, is to supplement the classroom by providing extended and different means of fulfilling the requirements of education. There is no antithesis between the classroom and student activities...Student activities has a legitimate claim upon the university for a basic role in the total education of the student. It should no more be conceived as a service than mathematics, sociology, or physics. All are needed activities with the university. (1964, p. 150)

Williamson and Biggs in 1975 made a strong argument for student life as making a contribution greater than simply providing a venue for the application of classroom training.

> We will contend and illustrate that the collegiate experience involves more than intellectual growth. Student life is indeed more than a continuation of discussion of what the teacher taught in the classroom. The kind of student life and development we advocate has its own unique potentiality for many kinds of learning in the informal relations of the out-of-class context. (p. 206)

In my monograph on Student Group Advising in Higher Education (1967) I summarized some of my thoughts on the utilization of the extracurriculum for educational gain:

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> To define a role for the extracurriculum in higher education, therefore, depends upon what we conceive the function of higher education to be. We may limit ourselves to intellectual training, in which case student activities become a distraction and an interference to be de-emphasized or abolished. Or we may attempt to utilize the total life of the campus to facilitate learning and be educational in its own right. This does not mean that we thereby minimize or denigrate the cultivation of the intellect, but it does mean that our philosophy of education can encompass the life of the mind while at the same time we exploit the full resources of the campus to extend imaginatively the ways in which learning may occur.(p. 7)

I concluded my comments on the advising of student organizations with a statement concerning collaboration for educational purposes.

> It is only when a partnership is achieved with students, faculty, and staff together that a true educational community and climate can be created and grow. Each participant can thus bring to the academic enterprise specialized knowledge or a unique perspective: this common pursuit of better education is then more likely to be productive of an improved climate for learning. (p. 31).

Before we leave the subject, let's look at a recent listing of outcomes attributed to out-of-class experiences and compare them with earlier such statements. Kuh (1995) attempted to "identify the out-of-class experiences that seniors associated with their learning and personal development" (p. 125). The activities that appeared to be most potent included leadership experiences, personal interaction with peers, and activities that required the student to apply knowledge learned in class.

In an earlier study, Kuh (1993) listed fourteen outcomes of out-of-class learning as reported by students: development of self-awareness; gains in autonomy and self-directedness; enhanced confidence and self-worth; increased altruism; ability to think reflectively; social and practical competence; acquisition of new knowledge; application of knowledge; learning academic skills; greater appreciation of cultural and artistic matters; acquiring attitudes, behaviors, and skills related to post college employment; greater

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sense of purpose; and the all-purpose, "other." It is worth noting that this more contemporary listing of outcomes appears to emphasize personal development to a greater extent than did the "extracurriculum as laboratory" or "education for citizenship" orientation of earlier student affairs educators.

Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, and Associates (1991, pp. 8-9) summarized the research literature on the benefits of out-of-class experiences and found that student participation was associated with positive attitudes about their college experience, development of managerial and leadership skills, adult success, enhanced self-esteem, ability to establish mature and intimate interpersonal relationships, gains in social concern or altruistic values, and, of course, indirect effects on satisfaction and persistence in college.

Conclusion

I'll end with that. We have seen how our perspective on the educational potential and outcomes of the extracurriculum has evolved and changed over the years. We began with Keppel's concern with inculcating good manners and habits of responsibility as learning objectives for the extracurriculum. Hand and his students saw the extracurriculum as a real-life laboratory situation as did Strang. Lloyd-Jones and Smith added the goal of developing good leadership and followership and other qualities of good citizenship, a theme echoed by Woolf and Woolf and by Arbuckle fifteen years later.

It remained for Brouwer and, later, Williamson, to articulate a broader educational philosophy for student activities that called for the reintegration of the out-of-class and the classroom and the identification of learning goals that would be a distinct contribution of the extracurriculum itself to the academic life of the institution. I concluded with a brief

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summary of what current research tells us about the effects of student involvement in out-of-class activities.

If there is one empirical finding that seems to resonate through all of the recent research, and that deserves to be emblazoned on the front page of every campus learning initiative, it is Astin's statement that, "the student's peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years" (1993, p. 398). While this simple principle could prove to be a key to our efforts to improve the learning environment on our campuses, the programming question remains, however: How can the power of peer influence be harnessed by the institution for positive educational gain?

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